

THE STATE OF THE REGION 2005

Measuring Regional Progress

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE 5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7

POPULATION 17

- Growth Characteristics 17
- Demographic Dynamics 22

THE ECONOMY 27

- Employment 27
- Employment by Sector 31
- Unemployment 34
- Income 36
- Poverty 40
- Taxable Sales 41
- International Trade 42

HOUSING 45

- Housing Construction 45
- Homeownership 48
- Housing Affordability 49
- Housing Crowding 53

GUEST ESSAY:

- The 2% Strategy: A Bold New Approach to Shape the Future of Southern California 54

TRANSPORTATION 63

- Highway Use and Congestion 63

- Highway Fatalities 65
- Transit Use and Performance 67
- Journey to Work: Travel Time 69
- Journey to Work: Mode Choices 69
- Airports 70
- Ports 72

GUEST ESSAY:

- Goods Movement in Southern California: Challenge, Opportunity, Solution 74

THE ENVIRONMENT 85

- Air Quality 85
- Water Resources 91
- Solid Waste 95

QUALITY OF LIFE 99

- Education 99
- Public Safety 104

METROPOLITAN REGIONS 109

- Socio-Economic Indicators 110
- Transportation 113

ENDNOTES 116

LIST OF MAPS 119

LIST OF FIGURES 119

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 122



PREFACE

Since its formation four decades ago in 1965, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has been working with local governments, public agencies and many other partners to develop a shared regional vision and to collaboratively resolve regional challenges. The SCAG region, also referred to in this report as Southern California, includes six counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura) and 187 cities. As a global gateway for international trade and international migration, Southern California is one of the most dynamic metropolitan regions in the world. Currently, the region would rank 10th among all national economies.

Over the past few decades, the SCAG region has experienced significant growth as well as changes in many dimensions including its demographic characteristics and economic base. The region has been facing tremendous challenges in regaining its economic competitiveness, ensuring environmental sustainability and providing residents equal access to resources and opportunities.

The State of the Region 2005 tracks Southern California's progress in achieving the goals in SCAG's *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide*. It compares the recent performance of our region with its own previous records and that of other large U.S. metropolitan areas. The report is intended to raise awareness and engage the public about vital issues affecting our shared future. In addition, it aims at assisting policy makers, business and community leaders in assessing our region's position and progress and informing policy deliberations.

Preparation for the 2005 Report was guided by SCAG's Benchmarks Task Force, consisting of local elected officials and regional issue experts in Southern California. While this 2005 Report was prepared as a stand-alone document, readers will find it beneficial to also refer to previous State of the Region reports for more detailed background information. These reports have been posted on the SCAG website at www.scag.ca.gov/publications.